



Hendry County Sheriff's Office

General Order 1.1

TITLE: Oath and Cannon of Ethics	SHERIFF'S APPROVAL: Digital
ORIGINATION DATE: May 25, 2019	REVISION DATE:
RELATED REFERENCES: CFA:	
REVIEW FREQUENCY: 3 YEARS	DATE OF NEXT REVIEW: May 25, 2022

I. PURPOSE: The purpose of this order is to ensure that agency members are aware of the actions and attitudes expected of them, and to provide the public with a general standard by which it can measure the performance of the agency.

II. SCOPE: This order shall apply to all sheriff's office members.

III. DISCUSSION: Florida state statute mandates that deputies take and subscribe to an oath of office, and pledge loyalty to the United States and the State of Florida prior to appointment, and before undertaking the duties of the office. It is equally important that deputies observe the principles as set forth in the canon of law enforcement ethics. Civilians take and subscribe to an oath of loyalty.

IV. POLICY: It shall be the policy of the sheriff's office to comply with state and federal law and preserve and protect the constitutional rights of the community. It shall further be the policy of the agency that all sworn members abide by the canon of law enforcement ethics at all times, as set forth in this order.

V. PROCEDURE:

Canon of Law Enforcement Ethics: Sworn deputies of the sheriff's office shall abide by the following canon of ethics:

- A. **Primary Responsibility of the Job:** The primary responsibility of law enforcement and of the individual law enforcement deputy is the protection of the people of the United States through the upholding of its laws; chief among which are the Constitution of the United States and the State of Florida, and their amendments. The law enforcement deputy represents the whole of the community and its legally expressed will, and is never the arm of any political party or clique.
- B. **Limitation of Authority:** The first duty of a law enforcement deputy, as upholder of the law, is to know the bounds the law has established for its enforcement. The law enforcement deputy represents the legal will of the community, be it federal, state or local. The law enforcement deputy must, therefore, be aware of the limitations and restrictions which the people, through law, have imposed as his/her primary responsibility. Law enforcement deputies shall recognize the genius of the American system of government which gives no person, group or institution absolute power. Law enforcement deputies must ensure that they, as prime defenders of such a system, do not pervert its character.
- C. **Duty to be Familiar with the Laws and with Responsibilities of Self and Other Public Officials:** Law enforcement deputies shall diligently apply themselves to the study of the principles of the laws which they are sworn to uphold. Law enforcement deputies shall ascertain their responsibilities in the particulars of

their enforcement, seeking aid from superiors in technical matters or principles, when such are not understood. Law enforcement deputies shall make special effort to fully understand their relationship to other public officials, particularly in matters of jurisdiction, both geographically and substantively.

- D. Utilization of Proper Means to Gain Proper Ends: Law enforcement deputies shall be mindful of their responsibility to pay strict heed to the selection of means in discharging the duties of their office. Violations of law or disregard for public safety and property on the part of a deputy are intrinsically wrong; it is self-defeating in that it instills in the public mind a like disposition. The employment of illegal means, no matter how worthy an end, is certain to encourage disrespect for the law and its deputies. If the law is to be honored, it must first be honored by those who enforce it.
- E. Cooperation with Public Officials in the Discharge of his/her Authorized Duties: Law enforcement deputies shall cooperate fully with other public officials in the discharge of authorized duties, regardless of party affiliation or personal prejudice. They shall be meticulous, however, in assuring themselves of the propriety, under the law, of such actions, and shall guard against the use of their office or person, whether knowingly or unknowingly, in any improper or illegal action. In any situation open to question, they shall seek authority from their supervisor, giving a full report of the proposed service or action.
- F. Private Conduct: Law enforcement deputies shall be mindful of their special identification by the public as upholders of the law. Laxity for conduct or manner in private life, expressing either disrespect for the law or seeking to gain special privilege for themselves or others, will certainly reflect upon the sheriff's office and the individual deputy. The community and the service require that law enforcement deputies lead decent and honorable lives. Following a law enforcement career gives no one special privileges, however, it does give the satisfaction and pride of following and furthering an unbroken tradition of safeguarding the American republic. Deputies who reflect upon this tradition will not degrade it. Rather, they will so conduct their private lives that the public will regard them as examples of stability, fidelity and morality.
- G. Conduct toward the Public: Law enforcement deputies, mindful of their responsibility to the whole community, shall deal with individuals of the community in a manner calculated to instill respect for its laws and its law enforcement service. Law enforcement deputies shall conduct their official lives in a manner such as will inspire confidence and trust. Thus, they shall be neither overbearing nor subservient, as no individual citizen has an obligation to stand in awe of them, nor a right to command them. Deputies shall give service where they can, and require compliance with the law. They shall do so neither from personal preference or prejudice, but rather as duly appointed deputies of the law discharging a sworn obligation.
- H. Conduct in Arresting and Dealing with Law Violators:
 - 1. Law enforcement deputies shall use powers of arrest strictly in accordance with the law and with due regard for the rights of the citizens concerned. Their office gives them neither the right to judge the violator, nor any authority to administer punishment for the offense. They shall, at all times, have a clear appreciation of responsibilities and limitations regarding detention of the violator.
 - 2. They shall conduct themselves in such a manner as will minimize the possibility of having to use protective action. To this end they shall cultivate a dedication to the service of the people and the equitable upholding of the law, whether in the processing of law violators, or in dealing with law-abiding citizens.
- I. Gifts and Favors: Law enforcement deputies, representing government, bear the heavy responsibility of maintaining in their own conduct the honor and integrity of all government institutions. They shall, therefore, guard against placing themselves or others in a position in which any person can reasonably assume that special consideration is being given. Thus, they shall be firm in refusing gifts, favors or gratuities, large or small, which can, in the public mind, be interpreted as capable of influencing their judgment in the discharge of their duties.

J. Presentation of Evidence:

1. Law enforcement deputies shall be concerned equally in the prosecution of the wrongdoer and the defense of the innocent. They shall ascertain what constitutes evidence and shall present such evidence impartially and without malice. In so doing, they will ignore social, political and all other distinctions among the persons involved, strengthening the tradition of the reliability and integrity of a deputy's word.
2. Law enforcement deputies shall make a concerted effort to increase perception and skill of observation, mindful that in many situations theirs is the sole impartial testimony to the facts relating to the incident to which they have responded.

K. Attitude toward Profession: Law enforcement deputies shall regard the discharge of their duties as a public trust and recognize their responsibilities as a public servant. By diligent study and sincere attention to self-improvement, they shall strive to make the best possible application of science to the solution of crime, and in the field of human relationships strive for effective leadership and public influence in matters affecting public safety. They shall appreciate the importance and responsibility of their office, and hold law enforcement work to be an honorable profession rendering valuable service to both community and country.

L. Confidentiality: Whatever a member sees, hears or learns of, which is of a confidential nature, will be kept secret and confidential, unless the performance of duty or legal provision requires otherwise. Further, members of the public have a right to security and privacy, and information obtained about them must not be improperly divulged.

M. Conflict of Interest: Members are prohibited from engaging in activities that constitute a conflict of interest.

VI. GLOSSARY:

DISPOSITION: The power or authority to arrange, settle or manage; putting in order.

FIDELITY: Faithful devotion to duty or one's obligations.

GRATUITIES: Gifts of money, especially in amounts given over payment due for a service rendered; a tip.

INTRINSICALLY: Essentially, or inherently not dependent on external circumstances.

LAXITY: Not rigid or tight; loose.

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